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ABSTRACT

Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 will dramatically improve public education throughout the state. This report provides background and an outline of the act. The law increases state funding of education by more than $360 million a year over FY 1993 funding and sets into motion a series of reforms. Basic education, including science and mathematics, is improved under the act. It will also expand programs such as language and communications, and vocational opportunities. In addition the law establishes new statewide performance standards for students. Other goals of the law include new curriculum frameworks, a statewide assessment system for schools and school districts, full accountability for results, and educational equity. Specific reforms include reducing class size in lower grades, increasing community involvement, improving vocational education, and greater use of technology. The second part of this report includes answers to 18 commonly asked questions about the Outstanding School Act of 1993. Many of these questions are concerned with funding, taxes, and the quality of education in Missouri. (JPT)

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A PRIMER *to the* OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS ACT

Governor Mel Carnahan

EA 025 773

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MISSOURI
JEFFERSON CITY

MEL CARNAHAN
GOVERNOR

ROOM 216
STATE CAPITOL
65101

Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 (SB 380) initiates sweeping reforms which will help our children learn more successfully and will increase the accountability of our schools to the people of Missouri. The act increases equity in our education system through a new foundation formula. The new formula is designed to ensure that no child in Missouri is denied the opportunity for a quality education simply because of where he or she happens to live. It is my belief that Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act will serve as a national model of meaningful education reform. I am firmly committed to the efficient and effective implementation of this landmark legislation.

In order that you be as fully informed as possible, I am pleased to provide you with this document, *A Primer to the Outstanding Schools Act*. The *Primer* provides extensive context and background, as well as detailed descriptions of the various elements of the act. In addition, the *Primer* includes a question-and-answer section to address some of the more commonly asked questions about the act. It is my hope that this booklet will serve as an aid to all Missourians in understanding our new education law.

By working together, we have taken a historic step to help our children and our state. I look forward to continuing our work together to move Missouri forward.

Very truly yours,

Mel Carnahan

Mel Carnahan

PART I

An Overview of The Outstanding Schools Act of 1993

A Missouri court ruling, progressive leadership by a new governor and the prompt actions of state legislators produced a bold initiative to create first-rate schools throughout the state. The new law brightens prospects for all of Missouri's young people, and it will pay big dividends for everyone in our state.

The Outstanding Schools Act of 1993, signed into law by Governor Mel Carnahan on May 27, 1993, after passage with bipartisan support in both houses of the Missouri legislature, will dramatically improve public education throughout our state. It increases Missouri's financial investment in education by more than $360 million a year over FY 1993 funding, but more importantly, it sets into motion a series of carefully planned and thoughtfully orchestrated reforms designed to transform Missouri's school system into a model of educational excellence.

Approximately $310 million of the increase in state funding for education will come from increased taxes on corporations and the wealthiest 11.5 percent of Missourians. Another $50 million will come from permanent budget cuts. *The average Missouri family will not pay any additional state taxes as a result of this new law.* (See "Questions and Answers about the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993," pages 16-17, for more detailed tax information.)

This much-needed legislation will provide hundreds of thousands of young Missourians with the education and training they will need to achieve their ambitions. At the same time, it will give Missouri employers a vital, homegrown infusion of sophisticated skills, knowledge and expertise to help them compete in the emerging global economy.

The new law also means our children's chances for a sound education will no longer depend on whether the communities they live in are poor or affluent, because it dramatically reforms the state's antiquated school funding system.* A new and more equitable system has long been needed, but it became *legally imperative* when the old funding system was declared unconstitutional by a Missouri Circuit Court.

The Outstanding Schools Act represents a merger of the court's legal ruling with Governor Mel Carnahan's firm commitment to build an education system second to none, plus an extraordinarily effective bipartisan legislative effort. The result is a bold, innovative plan to move Missouri, and Missourians, to the front of the class — the world class.

** The key components of the state's school funding system are the Foundation Program and local property taxes.*

BACKGROUND
Something Had to Be Done

The Outstanding Schools Act addresses two critical issues that have dogged our education system for decades: (1) The *quality* of Missouri's public schools and what that means for our young people, as well as for Missouri's economy; and (2) the *inequality* of the state funding system for education.

THE QUALITY ISSUE ▶ Our future is only as good as our schools.

Of all the factors which contribute to the economic success or failure of a state, experts agree that none is more critical than the availability of a well-educated work force. Yet, for years, the uneven and unsatisfactory quality of Missouri's public schools has seriously handicapped our young people's chances for success and placed our state at a disadvantage in creating and attracting new businesses and industries in this competitive global economy.

During the coming decades, companies trying to build a competitive edge in a global market will need fewer and fewer unskilled workers. Instead, the demand will be for employees who combine knowledge of sophisticated technology with a strong foundation of basic education. They will have to be skilled problem solvers and decision makers as well.

Companies can't afford to locate in an area where they will have difficulty hiring skilled workers. If they have to invest millions of dollars in remedial training for under-educated workers, businesses won't locate — or stay — in Missouri. Under-prepared employees, who have not been adequately educated by their schools, cost employers money and hinder their ability to grow.

Good schools are arguably the number one attraction that an area offers to business owners, their employees, and all families seeking a healthy environment in which to raise their children. The quality of a community's schools will continue to be one of the top factors in a family's decision to move to, or continue to live in, an area. Parents worried about the quality of Missouri's schools may consider a move to Missouri as a risk to their children's future. This situation is unacceptable.

Perhaps Missouri's most troubling statistic is its dropout rate, which has hovered around 25 percent for the past decade. Despite a concerted effort by Missouri educators in recent years to reduce the dropout rate, more than one in four students who enter public high school in our state fail to graduate four years later. This problem

BACKGROUND
(continued)

must be solved if Missouri is to realize its economic promise. We can no longer permit one-fourth of our young people to leave school without the skills they will need to lead productive lives. The Outstanding Schools Act offers sweeping, fundamental reforms needed to raise the quality of Missouri's education system and secure our economic future.

THE EQUITY ISSUE ▶ Children from poor areas don't deserve poor schools.

Missouri's inequitable and outmoded system for school funding — which the Outstanding Schools Act overhauls — has exacerbated the problems of school quality and compromised high academic standards in many areas of our state. It was a system that resulted in more funding for the wealthiest communities in Missouri and less funding for the most hard-pressed. That's because funds were apportioned primarily on the basis of a school district's property values, without adequate regard for the inequities which naturally result from this approach. Hence, young people from school districts with low property values were often severely shortchanged in the educational opportunities afforded them, putting them at a severe disadvantage in today's challenging job market. Our children deserve better.

Governor Carnahan's Election Was a Mandate for School Reform

In his 1992 campaign for Governor, Mel Carnahan pledged to make the reform and improvement of Missouri's schools his top priority. His overwhelming victory in the November 1992 general election was a clear mandate to solve Missouri's education crisis, even if it required additional tax revenues to bring our schools up to high standards.

Governor Carnahan promised to create a world-class school system for Missouri that would serve as a cornerstone for revitalizing the state's economy. It would also give Missouri's children the educational opportunities they need to achieve their hopes and dreams for rewarding careers. He vowed to reform the state's education system, strengthen basic education and vocational training, and make teachers and administrators far more accountable for getting results. Even before his inauguration, the Governor-elect had developed exciting plans for making the improvements he advocated.

Judge Kinder's Order Created Extreme Urgency

Just days after Governor Carnahan took office in January of 1993, however, his plans for reforming the state education system took on a whole new level of urgency: Missouri Judge Byron Kinder issued an official ruling that the state's system of funding education was so unfair and unequal that it was unconstitutional.

Judge Kinder's ruling set a deadline of August 28, 1993, for adopting a new system. If the state failed to take timely and appropriate action, it was possible that the courts could ultimately have taken over the operation of Missouri's schools and/or ordered massive revenue increases — much as the federal district courts did in the St. Louis and Kansas City school desegregation cases.

World-Class Schools at a Reasonable Cost

Judge Kinder stated in his decision that, under the old education funding system, it would take *almost $1 billion in additional funding* to raise the level of spending per pupil in Missouri to the national average.* That would be a staggering burden to place on Missouri's taxpayers. By contrast, the far-reaching reforms set forth in the Outstanding Schools Act will cost about one-third that amount and will move Missouri toward accomplishing Governor Carnahan's goal of creating a world-class school system.

** In his official ruling (January 15, 1993) Judge Kinder stated: "In order to 'level up' the current expenditures per pupil in Missouri to the national average of $4,975, additional funds in the approximate amount of $957 million would be needed."*

What the New Law Will Accomplish

Although the new law increases Missouri's investment in public education by over $360 million, the impact of the additional funds will be significantly magnified by thoughtful, far-reaching changes in how the state *carries out* its responsibilities for education. This remarkable initiative does not merely aim to patch up the state's old education system, add some new and rebuilt parts, and keep it going for a few more years. Instead, it creates a *new* model, because Governor Carnahan, legislative leaders and other state officials recognized that we live in an increasingly complex world where education is a vital component of success. They were committed to developing new approaches more attuned to today's realities and designed to prepare our young people for the daunting social, economic and technological challenges of the 21st century. Specifically, the Outstanding Schools Act will accomplish the following goals:

What the New Law Will Accomplish

(continued)

▶ Strengthening basic education

The Outstanding Schools Act won't abandon the "Three Rs." It will strengthen and expand upon them and greatly enhance basic education throughout the state. The act will improve science and mathematics education and provide increased exposure to scientific subjects, from basic chemistry to physics to computer programming. It will expand language and communications courses. It will revitalize and upgrade vocational programs to enable students who aren't college-bound to qualify for good jobs after completing high school. And it will strengthen education in all these areas by ensuring that students not only *know* information, but also can *use* their knowledge and critical thinking skills to succeed throughout life.

▶ Adopting challenging performance standards to ensure national and international competitiveness

Under the new law, the State Board of Education is required to adopt challenging statewide performance standards for students. These standards will be based on a careful review of the knowledge and skills necessary for students to be successful in postsecondary education and in current — and future — job markets. The State Board will receive help in developing the standards from the Commission on Performance created by the act, as well as working groups of education professionals and ad hoc committees composed of business, civic and education leaders.

The new standards will be guided by, and developed in conjunction with, challenging national standards now being formulated by education experts from a partnership of about 20 states including Missouri. By combining the knowledge and expertise of Missouri educators with ideas from the national level, we will ensure that Missouri schools are among the very best in the entire country — and the world. If we are to compete in a modern global economy, it is imperative that our education system be competitive nationally and internationally. Students who meet the challenges of the new standards will be well prepared to succeed in life and become productive citizens.

What the New Law Will Accomplish

(continued)

Currently, there are no statewide standards that students must meet. Some schools have used questions from the Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests (MMAT) as "standards." But the value of the MMAT has been undermined by the practice of only preparing students to do well on those tests, at the expense of other learning. This practice leads to students who can answer specific questions, but are unable to think critically or apply their knowledge to new situations. The goal of the Outstanding Schools Act is to establish broad standards that will ensure that students not only *learn* basic academic skills, but also that they can *apply* their knowledge and critical-thinking skills in real-world situations.

▶ Developing curriculum frameworks to serve as guides, not mandates

The Outstanding Schools Act requires that the State Board of Education adopt rigorous performance standards for students. Each school district must then develop and use its own appropriate written curriculum designed to ensure that students will meet these performance standards. The State Board will provide model "curriculum frameworks," which a school district may choose to adapt or adopt as its own written curriculum. *However, these frameworks are not mandates.*

The new system created under the Outstanding Schools Act will not impose a statewide curriculum on local school districts. Nor will it force schools or school districts into rigid statewide lesson plans or methodology "straitjackets." On the contrary, it specifically encourages and rewards innovative approaches and creative initiatives that will enhance the learning process and help schools and students achieve their goals. The act also puts great emphasis on the importance of staying flexible — leaving ample room for local options.

▶ Implementing a new statewide assessment system to ensure that schools and school districts have to *deliver*

The Outstanding Schools Act requires the State Board of Education to adopt a statewide assessment system that will measure the degree to which students meet the performance standards. The assessment system will measure students' knowledge, as well as their ability to *use* this knowledge to solve complex problems. And it will utilize assessment tests and student projects developed in conjunction with national experts.

What the New Law Will Accomplish

(continued)

The new assessment system will not compare average scores of students at one school with the average for the state. Rather, it recognizes that some students are starting ahead of students in other schools, and it will assess whether students in each school are making real, measurable progress toward meeting the performance standards. The assessment system will track the performance of each school in the state, not against other schools, but against its own past performance.

Schools where students consistently perform at exemplary levels will be given waivers from complying with some state rules and regulations, which will provide them with increased flexibility to innovate in an effort to attain even higher levels of achievement. However, schools whose students are *not* making real, measurable progress toward meeting the performance standards are failing their students. These schools will be reviewed and may be declared "academically deficient."

▶ Ensuring teamwork and demanding full accountability for results

The Outstanding Schools Act also encourages — and demands — greater efficiency, more innovation, and closer cooperation among classroom teachers, principals, district superintendents, school board members and state officials.

The new law puts everyone "on the same team." If a school fails to measure up (is found to be academically deficient), everyone involved is held accountable for the failure, just as all would benefit from success. They either sink or swim together. And the penalties for delivering less than acceptable results can be substantial. These penalties include suspension of tenure for all faculty members at a school, salary freezes or loss of jobs for principals, and recall votes for school board members in districts with schools that are still academically deficient after two years.

In short, the new law makes it clear that the students' best interests come *first* — no excuses accepted.

▶ Increasing equity for schoolchildren

Equity is really just another word for "fairness" for schoolchildren. When people say this act increases equity, they are saying that it helps make sure that school funding is distributed fairly, so that children in each school district in the state get a "fair share" of funds.

What the New Law Will Accomplish
(continued)

Missouri Judge Byron Kinder declared Missouri's education funding system to be so inequitable that "it does not pass constitutional muster." He gave the state a deadline of August 28, 1993, to fix it.

The old funding system was inequitable mainly because it allowed more funds to flow to rich districts with high property values than to poor districts with low property values, even if those districts had exactly the same property tax rates. That was clearly unfair. The poorer districts were not getting their "fair share" of funding, simply because their property values happened to be low. In real people terms, that often meant that children living in poorer districts were being denied the opportunity for a good education simply because of geography. The Outstanding Schools Act is designed to fix this problem. Under the new law, all children will have quality educational opportunities regardless of where in Missouri they live.

The new funding system is much fairer than the old system. Instead of basing funding on property values — something communities have little control over — the new system bases funding squarely on the property tax *rate* — something that communities *can* control.

Under the new system, one penny of property tax levied will provide the same amount of funding for 95 percent of all students. In other words, no matter how high or low their school districts' property values, 95 percent of all students will now receive equal amounts of formula plus property tax funding — as long as their school districts' property tax *rates* are equal. *An important provision of the act is that no school district in the state will receive less funding per student than it did prior to passage of the act.*

Key Reforms of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993

Here are a few of the key reforms that make the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 such a promising start toward the achievement of a world-class school system.

▶ PREPARING OUR CHILDREN FOR SUCCESS

Reducing Class Size

- Schools will be able to use various approaches to reduce student-teacher ratios and promote student achievement in grades K-3.

A+ Schools

- The Act establishes a career curriculum for non-college-bound students.

Key Reforms
(continued)

- Schools designated as "A+" must develop partnership plans with community leaders to provide students with access to apprenticeships, training, internships and other career-enhancing opportunities.
- The A+ Schools Program will help reduce the dropout rate by providing incentives for at-risk students to stay in school and get job training.

Parents as Teachers

- Funding for the highly successful Parents as Teachers early childhood education program will be more than doubled to ensure that all families may voluntarily participate in the program.
- The Parents as Teachers program increases parents' knowledge of child development and exemplifies the basic philosophy that *parents are the first and foremost teachers of their children.*

Vocational Education Improvement

- Public high schools, vocational-technical schools and community colleges will strengthen curriculum, implement new and innovative programs and upgrade equipment and facilities.
- Occupations that will be in highest demand in the future will be emphasized.

New Technology

- Students will have access to modern technology in their classrooms.
- Students and schools will be able to access a worldwide network of computing and information resources. Through this network, students will be able to access the world's best libraries and communicate with other students across the globe.
- Schools will be able to upgrade science and math lab equipment and computers.

New Schools Pilot Project

- Three experimental schools will be established to foster innovation and develop new, effective educational methods that could later serve as models for other Missouri schools.

▶ ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY AND INNOVATION

Statewide Performance Standards

- Challenging statewide performance standards will be adopted to ensure that students not only *know* information, but also can *use* their knowledge and critical thinking skills to succeed throughout life.

Key Reforms
(continued)

- These standards will be based on a careful review of the knowledge and skills necessary for students to succeed in postsecondary education and job markets.

Statewide Assessment System

- Schools and educators will have to *deliver*, and will be held accountable for the degree to which students meet the performance standards.
- A rigorous assessment system, utilizing assessment tests and student projects, will be developed in conjunction with national experts.
- The assessment system will ensure that schools are held accountable for their students making real, measurable progress toward meeting the performance standards. The assessment system will track the performance of each school in the state, not against other schools, but against its own past performance.

Outstanding Schools Waivers

- Schools that are doing well will be given the flexibility to experiment with approaches aimed at doing even better.
- Waivers from rules and regulations are provided to promote innovation, encourage efficiency and allow schools to strive for further improvement.

Academically Deficient Schools

- Schools repeatedly failing to provide their students with an adequate education may be declared academically deficient by the state.
- Review teams will be appointed to help deficient schools improve.
- There can be substantial penalties for schools showing continued deficiency, including suspension of tenure for all faculty members at a school, salary freezes or loss of jobs for principals and recall votes for school board members.

Performance Reports

- School districts will publish annual local performance reports that include information about statewide assessment results, attendance, parental involvement in school activities and other important indicators of schools' progress.
- An annual state report will be published on the postsecondary achievement and job attainment of Missouri's high school graduates.

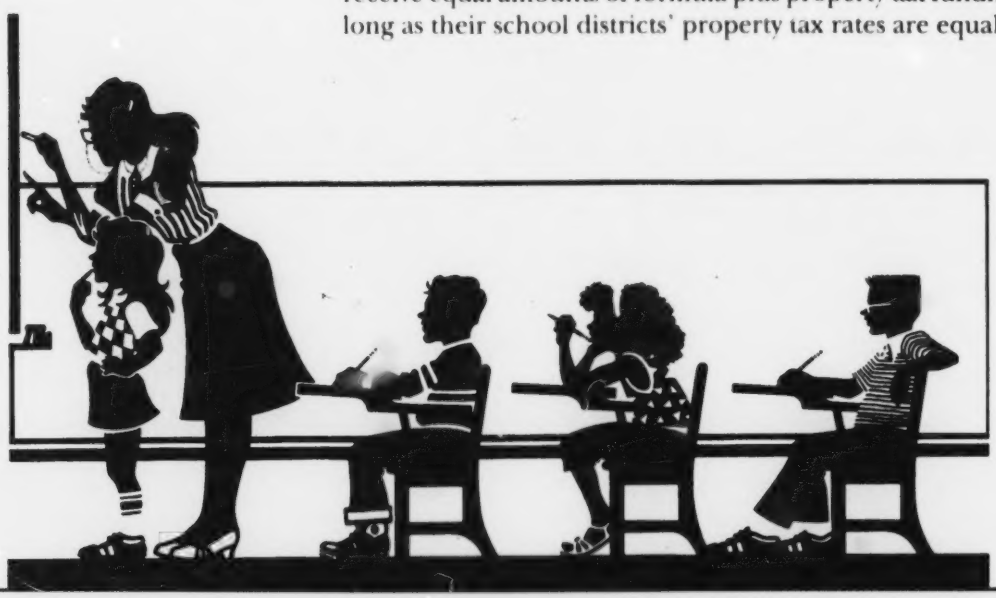
Key Reforms
(continued)

Professional Development and Training for Educators

- To help our children prepare for tomorrow by preparing their teachers today, 1 percent of a school district's foundation formula money will be allocated for professional development.
- Additional resources will be directed where they are needed most by targeting 1 percent of the total foundation formula to statewide areas of critical need for learning. Targeted areas will include teaching at-risk children, parental involvement and assessment techniques.
- Teachers will receive help to improve their performance, so that their students can achieve the challenging statewide performance standards. Teachers will be fully trained regarding the performance standards and the assessment system.
- For the first time, new school board members will be required to get a minimum of 16 hours of leadership training.

▶ ENHANCING EQUITY FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN

- The Outstanding Schools Act reforms Missouri's school funding system to increase equity.
- The new funding system is much fairer than the old system. Instead of basing funding on property values — something communities have little control over — the new system bases funding squarely on the property tax *rate* — something that communities *can* control.
- Under the new system, one penny of property tax levied will provide the same amount of funding for 95 percent of all students. In other words, no matter how high or low their school districts' property values, 95 percent of all students will now receive equal amounts of formula plus property tax funding, as long as their school districts' property tax rates are equal.



Key Reforms
(continued)

- Under this act, all children will have quality educational opportunities regardless of where in Missouri they live.
- Equity will be enhanced by increasing funds for poor districts, without taking money away from other districts. *No school district in the state will receive less funding per pupil for education than it did prior to the passage of the Outstanding Schools Act.*

PART II

Questions & Answers About The Outstanding Schools Act of 1993

What is the "equity" issue that prompted a judge to declare the state's education funding system unconstitutional?

Equity is really just another word for "fairness" for schoolchildren. When people say the Outstanding Schools Act increases equity, they are saying that it helps make sure that school funding is distributed fairly, so that children in each school district in the state get a "fair share" of funds.

In a ruling issued on January 15, 1993, Missouri Judge Byron Kinder declared Missouri's education funding system to be so inequitable that "it does not pass constitutional muster." He gave the state a deadline of August 28, 1993, to fix it.

The old funding system was inequitable mainly because it allowed more funds to flow to rich districts with high property values than to poor districts with low property values, even if those districts had exactly the same property tax rates. That was clearly unfair. Poorer districts were not getting their "fair share" of funding simply because their property values happened to be low. In real people terms, that often meant that children living in poorer districts were denied the opportunity for a good education simply because of geography. The Outstanding Schools Act is designed to fix this problem. Under the act, all children will have quality educational opportunities regardless of where they live.

Isn't this just a way to move money from affluent areas of the state to poorer ones?

NO. This act is a way to ensure reform and accountability in our education system statewide and is a way to increase equity. It is not designed to favor any particular region of the state. It is designed to do a better job of giving each Missouri child in each Missouri school district a "fair share" of education funding, regardless of geography. *And an important provision of the act is that no school district in the state will receive less funding per student than it did prior to passage of the act.*

What does the new state funding system do that the old one didn't?

The new funding system is much fairer than the old system. Instead of basing funding on property values — something communities have little control over — the new system bases funding squarely on the property tax rate — something that communities can control.

The New State Funding System (continued)

Under the new system, one penny of property tax levied will provide the same amount of funding for 95 percent of all students. In other words, no matter how high or low their school districts' property values, 95 percent of all students will now receive equal amounts of funding — as long as their school districts' property tax rates are equal.

Under this act, all children will have quality educational opportunities regardless of where in Missouri they live.

How much state money will be required to fund the Outstanding Schools Act?

The act increases Missouri's financial investment in education by more than $360 million a year over FY 1993 funding. Approximately $310 million of the increase in state funding for education will come from increased taxes on corporations and the wealthiest 11.5 percent of Missourians. Another $50 million will come from permanent budget cuts. *The average Missouri family will not pay any additional state taxes as a result of the new law.* Some school districts may also have to raise local levies on property. (See "local tax consequences" question below.)

How much in state taxes will the average Missouri family have to pay to fund the Outstanding Schools Act?

The short answer is "nothing." That's because the $310 million in additional state revenue required by the act will come from increased taxes on corporations and the wealthiest 11.5 percent of Missourians; 88.5 percent of all Missouri households will pay no additional state income tax under this act.

Following are the statewide average incomes for several categories of taxpayers, as well as the respective amounts of additional state taxes that each can expect to pay as a result of the act.

Taxpayer	Average Income	State Tax Increase
Single Head of Household [1]	$19,080	$0
Single Household [2]	$26,331	$0
Married, One Income	$27,254	$0
Married, Two Incomes	$47,250	$0

[1] Single Head of Household — One single person in a household with one or more dependents.

[2] Single Household — One single person in a household with no dependents.

How do taxpayers who will be affected by the act calculate its likely impact on their state income tax?

The Outstanding Schools Act does not increase state personal income tax rates. Instead, it limits the amount of federal income tax that you can deduct on your state tax return. The new maximum allowable deductions are $5,000 for individuals and $10,000 for couples filing jointly. The Missouri Office of Administration has calculated average state income tax increases for various categories of taxpayers.

Missouri Adjusted Gross Income Class	Approximate Tax Increase		
	Single	Single Head of Household	Married Filing Jointly
BELOW $30,000	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0
$ 30,000 - $ 40,000	14	0	0
$ 40,000 - $ 50,000	133	23	0
$ 50,000 - $ 60,000	275	156	0
$ 60,000 - $ 70,000	420	301	0
$ 70,000 - $ 80,000	573	431	59
$ 80,000 - $ 90,000	716	588	195
$ 90,000 - $100,000	884	721	335
$100,000 - $200,000	1,489	1,314	910

Note: *All of the information in the two questions above was provided by the Division of Budget and Planning, Missouri Office of Administration.*

Is all of the state funding for the Outstanding Schools Act coming from increased taxes?

NO. The Governor and General Assembly also cut state spending by $50 million to help pay for the initiatives in the act. Also, proceeds from riverboat gambling will be used to fund the new school funding system and other initiatives in the act. In addition, if state spending on desegregation declines, the savings will be spent on the new funding system and other initiatives in the act.

Will there be any local tax consequences as a result of this new law?

Depending on which school district you live in, you may have to pay higher local property taxes to fund your local school district's share of the cost. Prior to the Outstanding Schools Act, state law required school districts to levy a minimum property tax of $2 per $100 assessed valuation. The new law requires school districts to raise levies to a minimum of $2.75 by 1994.

Why not exempt people with no school-age children from having to pay for increased education costs?

It doesn't benefit just the children or parents of children being educated in public schools. Education benefits everyone in the state and is the very foundation of a successful democracy and a prosperous economy. The more people we educate, and the better we educate them, the better our state will be. A better-educated citizenry will lead to increased economic opportunities for the entire state, lower crime rates, and reduced expenditures on welfare, unemployment compensation and prisons. Since every citizen benefits from quality education, every taxpaying citizen should help pay for that benefit.

Why wasn't this act put up for a vote of the people?

To delay action would have been irresponsible and inappropriate. Just days after Governor Carnahan took office in January of 1993, Missouri Judge Byron Kinder issued an official ruling that the state's system of funding education was so unfair and unequal that it was unconstitutional. Judge Kinder's ruling set a deadline of August 28, 1993, to fix it. If the state failed to take timely and appropriate action, it was possible that the courts could ultimately have taken over the operation of Missouri's schools and/or ordered massive revenue increases — much as the federal district courts did in the St. Louis and Kansas City school desegregation cases.

Judge Kinder stated in his decision that, under the old education funding system, it would take almost $1 billion in additional funding to raise the level of spending per pupil in Missouri to the national average.* That would be a staggering burden to place on Missouri's taxpayers. By contrast, the far-reaching reforms set forth in the Outstanding Schools Act will cost about one-third that amount and will move Missouri toward accomplishing Governor Carnahan's goal of creating a world-class school system.

** Judge Kinder stated in his official ruling: "In order to 'level up' the current expenditures per pupil in Missouri to the national average of $4,975, additional funds in the approximate amount of $957 million would be needed."*

The Hancock Amendment said the citizens would get to vote on every tax increase. Why didn't the Hancock Amendment force a public vote on this measure?

The Hancock Amendment does not — and never has — specified that every tax increase must go to a vote of the people. It does set a revenue limit on state government.

The Hancock Amendment stipulates that, over time, total Missouri state revenue (the taxes collected by our state) cannot increase faster than Missouri personal income. Missouri courts have ruled that voter-approved tax hikes are not included in this calculation. The Hancock Amendment thus establishes a "lid" on state revenue

The Hancock Amendment (continued)

increases, except for those revenue increases adopted by a vote of the people.

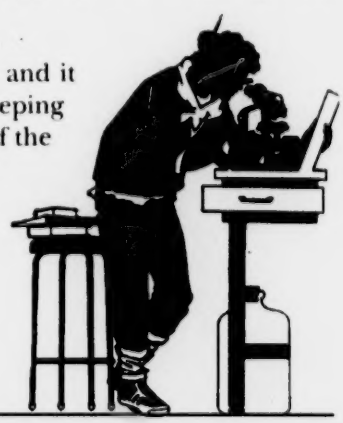
The State of Missouri's Office of Administration has projected that state revenues, exclusive of additional revenues to fund the Outstanding Schools Act, will be at least $500 million under the limit established by the Hancock Amendment in 1994 and in the foreseeable future. This difference is referred to as the "cushion." Since the Outstanding Schools Act raises state revenue by only $310 million when fully funded, it is well within this "cushion" and well under the Hancock lid.

How will we know whether the new program does, in fact, make a positive difference in the quality of Missouri's public schools?

Although the financial portion of the Outstanding Schools Act has captured a lot of attention, the single most important aspect of the new law is its enactment of sweeping, fundamental reforms needed to raise the quality of Missouri's education system. The act insists on high academic performance standards and an assessment system to track progress on those standards; it demands greater efficiency and innovation; it requires that schools and school districts be held publicly accountable for results. The act is designed to make a dramatic positive difference — a difference everyone will be able to see and track — in the quality of Missouri's public schools.

The act establishes several mechanisms for measuring educational improvement. First, we will be able to determine if students are meeting the challenging statewide performance standards by examining the results provided by the new statewide assessment system. Second, we will track the high school graduation rate to ensure that various strategies and programs, including those designed for at-risk students, are improving the graduation rate. Third, high schools will get valuable information about their graduates' postsecondary performance and job attainment. With this information provided by Missouri vocational-technical schools, colleges and universities, high schools can adjust their curricula to give current students more appropriate training and coursework.

Success will not happen overnight, and it will not be easy. But — with the sweeping reforms and public accountability of the Outstanding Schools Act — it will happen.



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Is a state curriculum mandated by the Outstanding Schools Act?

NO. The act does require the State Board of Education to adopt rigorous statewide performance standards for students. Each school district must then develop and use its own appropriate written curriculum designed to ensure that students will meet these performance standards. The State Board will provide model curriculum frameworks, which a school district may choose to adapt or adopt as its own written curriculum. However, these frameworks are not mandates.

Thus, the Outstanding Schools Act is flexible in allowing schools and communities to determine the best way to help their children succeed. Where the law is not flexible is in its requirement that each school provide a quality education to its students. Schools will have a lot of flexibility in designing their curriculum, but we will expect their designed curriculum to result in students who achieve the performance standards which are adopted by the State Board of Education.

Are the provisions for dealing with academically deficient schools simply the state's undeclared strategy for consolidating or closing schools that aren't cost-efficient enough to operate individually?

NO. One of the primary intentions of the Outstanding Schools Act is to ensure that every Missouri child gets the opportunity for a sound education. School superintendents, principals and teachers must be held accountable for producing results. "Looking the other way" and letting academically deficient schools shortchange their students would be very wrong. The act provides that before a school is consolidated or closed, it will receive extensive assistance and guidance from expert review teams in order to help the school improve its performance and stay open. The goal is to help each school provide a quality education for its students.

There's been a great deal of talk about "new standards." Who is going to establish these new standards — and what was wrong with the old ones?

Under the new law, the State Board of Education is required to adopt challenging statewide performance standards for students. These standards will be based on a careful review of the knowledge and skills necessary for students to be successful in postsecondary education and in current — and future — job markets. The State Board will receive help in developing the standards from the Commission on Performance created by the Outstanding Schools Act, as well as from working groups of education professionals and ad hoc committees composed of business, civic and education leaders.

The new standards will be guided by, and developed in conjunction with, challenging national standards now being formulated by education experts from a partnership of more than 20 states including Missouri. By combining the knowledge and

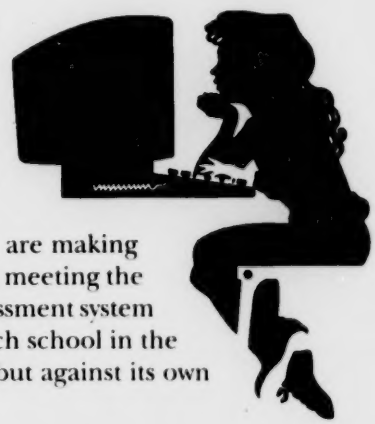
Establishing New Standards (continued)

expertise of Missouri educators with ideas from the national level, we will ensure that Missouri schools are among the very best in the entire country — and the world. If we are to compete successfully in a modern global economy, it is imperative that our education system be competitive nationally and internationally. Students who meet the challenges of the new standards will be well prepared to succeed in life and become productive citizens.

Currently, there are no statewide standards that students must meet. Some schools have used questions from the Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests (MMAT) as "standards." But the value of the MMAT has been undermined by the practice of only preparing students to do well on that test, at the expense of other learning. This practice leads to students who can answer specific questions, but are unable to think critically or apply their knowledge to new situations. The goal of the Outstanding Schools Act is to establish broad standards that will ensure that students not only know information, but can also use their knowledge and their critical thinking skills to succeed throughout life.

How can we be sure that schools and school districts will deliver on their responsibility to help their students meet the challenging new standards?

A new statewide assessment system will ensure that schools and school districts have to deliver. The Outstanding Schools Act requires the State Board of Education to adopt a statewide assessment system that will measure the degree to which students meet the performance standards. The assessment system will measure students' knowledge, as well as their ability to use this knowledge to solve complex problems. And it will utilize assessment tests and student projects developed in conjunction with national experts.



The new assessment system will not compare average scores of students at one school with the average for the state. Rather, it recognizes that some students are starting ahead of students in other schools, and it will assess whether students in each school are making real, measurable progress toward meeting the performance standards. The assessment system will track the performance of each school in the state, not against other schools, but against its own past performance.

Schools where students consistently perform at exemplary levels will be given waivers from complying with some state rules and regulations, which will provide them with increased flexibility to

Meeting the New Standards (continued)

innovate in an effort to attain even higher levels of achievement. However, schools whose students are not making real, measurable progress toward meeting the performance standards are failing their students. These schools will be reviewed and may be declared academically deficient.

The Outstanding Schools Act also encourages — and demands — greater efficiency, more innovation, and closer cooperation among classroom teachers, principals, district superintendents, school board members and state officials.

The new law puts everyone "on the same team." If a school fails to measure up (is found to be academically deficient), everyone involved is held accountable for the failure, just as all would benefit from success. They either sink or swim together. And the penalties for delivering less than acceptable results can be substantial. These penalties include suspension of tenure for all faculty members at a school, salary freezes or loss of jobs for principals and recall votes for school board members in districts with schools that are academically deficient two years in a row.

In short, the new law makes it clear that the students' best interests come first — no excuses accepted.

What will the act do to help non-college-bound students get better jobs? Also, will it do anything to specifically target the dropout rate?

The Outstanding Schools Act creates the "A+ Schools Program," which is designed to establish a career curriculum for non-college-bound students and to ensure that they graduate from a challenging course of studies with clearly defined skills and knowledge.

The A+ Schools Program is designed specifically to ensure that these non-college-bound students are not forgotten. To be designated "A+," schools must develop partnership plans with community leaders, including local business persons, labor leaders and parents, in order to provide non-college-bound students access to apprenticeships, training, internships, counseling and other career-enhancing opportunities. The new law also includes additional funding to upgrade vocational-technical training, and it places more emphasis on job placement than was previously the case.

The A+ Schools Program will also help reduce the dropout rate by providing incentives for at-risk students to stay in school and to get job training. It will emphasize placement in community colleges, vocational and technical schools and good jobs with workplace skill development opportunities.

Is outcome-based education mandated, or even included, in the Outstanding Schools Act?

NO. The act does not mandate, or even mention, outcome-based education (OBE).

Outcome-based education is one of many ways of organizing instruction to achieve higher performance levels than have been achieved traditionally. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does work with school administrators, teachers and community members who voluntarily choose to use OBE in their schools. OBE, however, is a separate initiative, and is not part of the Outstanding Schools Act.

In fact, the Outstanding Schools Act does not mandate any specific system of instruction. It allows schools and communities to determine the best ways for their students to achieve the statewide performance standards.

For more information about the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993, please call the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, at 314/751-3469.

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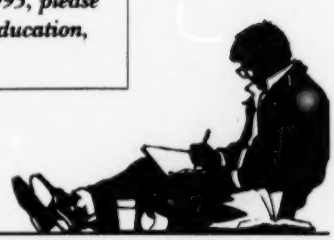

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